

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 034292

P R 121740Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0726

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 05685

EXDIS

FOR UNDERSECRETARY SISCO FROM PICKERING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, JO, US

SUBJECT: US ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN: HAWKS

1. I MET RIFAI MORNING APRIL L2 AND IN OUR CONVERSATION FOLLOWED UP POINTS YOU DISCUSSED WITH HIM EARLIER LAST WEEK.
2. ON HAWKS, WHICH HE RAISED WITH ME, HE REPEATED THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND US CONCERN OVER THEIR PRESS COMMENT. THE US HAD NOT EVEN SEEN FIT TO RAISE THE ISSUE WITH THEM AND, THEREFORE, KING HAD TO CONCLUDE THE DEAL WAS CLOSED. KING WAS NOW PLANNING TO GET IN TOUCH WITH SOVIETS WHEN HE GOT BACK TO AMMAN. ONCE HE DID THAT, KING WAS COMMITTED TO GOING AHEAD WITH THE USSR. TWICE BEFORE IN THE PAST, THE KING HAD GOTTEN STARTED WITH THE SOVIETS ONLY TO PULL BACK. HE COULD NOT RISK HIS CREDIBILITY AGAIN WITH THEM.
3. I TOLD RIFAI THAT JORDAN WOULD HAVE TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISION, BUT THAT BOTH YOU AND SECRETARY HAD MENTIONED OUR APPROACH TO THE SAUDIS. I COULD NOT TELL HIM WHEN WE WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE HIM ANY REACTION, BUT THAT THE PRESENT SET OF CONTRACTS HAD BEEN EXTENDED TO APRIL 30 AND AFTER THAT POINT, I HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE CONTRACTS

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WOULD LAPSE.

4. RIFAI SAID THAT THE KING WOULD PROCEED WITH THE VISIT OF THE SOVIET AIR FORCE CHIEF TO JORDAN IN MAY AND HIS OWN (KING'S) VISIT TO MOSCOW IN JUNE. BEFORE THAT DATE, KING WOULD HAVE TO WRITE THE "POLITICAL" LETTER TO BREZHNEV WHICH SOVIETS HAD INDICATED WAS THE PREREQUISITE FOR THIS DEAL. AFTER THAT LETTER IS SENT, RIFAI ASSURED ME, THE KING WOULD BECOME COMMITTED TO THE USSR SALE.

5. ON THE FUNDING ISSUES, FOR FY 1976, I REPEATED WHAT RIFAI SAID HE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE 10 PERCENT INCREASE. ON FY 1977, RIFAI SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT NO INCREASE WAS POSSIBLE AND ASKED US TO RECONSIDER. I SAID I WOULD PASS ON THIS REQUEST TO YOU, BUT KNEW IT WOULD BE HARD TO DO ANYTHING GIVEN THE PRESIDENT'S STRICT INSISTENCE ON A VERY TIGHT BUDGET FOR FY 1977.

6. RIFAI PRESSED HARD ON THE TRANSITIONAL QUARTER. I SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD INDICATED HE WOULD VETO THE BILL IF IT INCLUDED TRANSITIONAL QUARTER FUNDS FOR ISRAEL AND THE OTHER MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES. FOR JORDAN IT MEANT A LOSS OF \$17-19 MILLION WHILE FOR ISRAEL IT MEANT A LOSS OF \$500 MILLION. HE HAD URGED THE US LAST YEAR TO FOLLOW THIS COURSE OF ACTION. HE SAID THAT JORDAN WANTED AN INCREASE IN THE TRANSITIONAL QUARTER AS HE HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH SENATOR INNOUYE. I REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT COULD NOT INSIST ON NO FUNDS FOR ISRAEL AND THE OTHERS

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0727

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 05685

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NOW AND TURN AROUND AND REQUEST MORE FOR JORDAN.
HOWEVER, IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER SOME
OUT-YEAR CREDITS FOR A LATER STAGE OF THE HAWK DEPENDING
ON THE SAUDI REACTION TO OUR APPROACH.

7. HE THEN WENT INTO A LONG AND PREDICTABLE ATTACK ON
THE SAUDIS ALONG LINES WE HAVE ALL HEARD BEFORE.

8. COMMENT: RIFAI'S AND KING'S COMING APPROACH TO THE
SOVIETS IS OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO RAISE THE STAKES AND ALS
TO EXPLORE WHAT THEY CAN GET FROM USSR IN CONCRETE
TERMS. BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT OF THEIR VISIT WAS WHAT
THEY CONSIDER TO BE OBVIOUS OMISSION OF DISCUSSION OF
THE HAWK FROM MAJOR CONVERSATIONS. WHILE THEY KNOW THAT
WE ARE CONSIDERING THE QUESTION WITH THE SAUDIS, THEY
ARE ALSO SUSPICIOUS THAT THE DEAL IS BEING STRUNG OUT ON
PURPOSE, POSSIBLY TO SOFTEN THEM UP. I DID NOT GIVE
RIFAI THE IDEA THAT HE COULD DICTATE OUR TIMETABLE, AND
DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE RIGHT FOR US TO DO SO. HOW-
EVER, AT SOME POINT THE JORDANIANS WILL, IN MY JUDGMENT,
WANT TO EXPLORE FURTHER WITH THE SOVIETS WHAT THE USSR CA
DO. I CANNOT NOW PREDICT WHAT THE STEP WILL MEAN FOR US
PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION OR ON PART OF THE
SAUDIS. I HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE VERY
SHORTLY TO GET SOME CONSIDERED DISCUSSION GOING WITH
SAUDIS AND SOME KIND OF REPORT TO THE JORDANIANS ON
WHAT IS GOING ON.

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9. ON THE MONEY ISSUES, JORDANIANS WERE NOT HAPPY, BUT
UNDERSTAND THE LIMITATIONS ON WHAT WE CAN DO. I SUSPECT
THE PROBLEMS WILL BE SURFACED AGAIN IN THE FUTURE.

ARMSTRONG

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